



Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman
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Bill Would Streamline Bureaucracy to Help Cash-Strapped Schools

The final education reform bill proposed by House-Senate education conference leaders would streamline the federal education bureaucracy by consolidating or eliminating a host of existing programs, providing greater simplicity for local school officials and allowing resources to be targeted to where they would do the most good. The new simplicity and flexibility couldn't come at a better time for states and local schools, many of whom are facing a cash-crunch in today's economy.

H.R. 1 conference leaders have put forth a proposal that would reduce the overall number of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) programs to 45 -- two fewer ESEA programs than in the House-passed bill, 10 fewer ESEA programs than in current law, and 34 fewer ESEA programs than in the Senate-passed bill. The proposal would accomplish this by consolidating and streamlining programs and targeting resources to existing programs that help poor students and schools. All states and all local school districts would have greater freedom to decide how federal education funds would be spent -- providing an important new tool for schools facing a cash crunch in today's economy.

Ensuring that the final bill streamlines the overall number of programs, rather than adding dozens of new ones, has been a key challenge for conferees. The House and Senate bills (H.R. 1 and S. 1) differ strikingly in the overall number of programs authorized. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the Senate-passed bill would have increased the overall number of ESEA programs from 55 to a staggering 89, while the House bill would have streamlined the overall number from 55 to 47.

Message of the Day

Federal education resources should be targeted toward helping disadvantaged students learn to read, learn English, and learn math skills.

- ❑ *Conference leaders have put forth a proposal to streamline bureaucracy, provide new flexibility for states and schools, and focus funds on students who need help the most.*
- ❑ *The proposal put forth by conference leaders would authorize fewer programs than in current law, H.R. 1, and S. 1, streamlining the total to 45 programs.*
- ❑ *The more programs Washington creates, the more disadvantaged students are forced to compete for available funds.*

DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- Created in 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has ballooned from six programs in the original legislation to 55 in current law.
- As the Heritage Foundation's Krista Kafer wrote recently, "[t]his system of narrowly tailored and uncoordinated 'categorical' programs has been notably unsuccessful in helping the most vulnerable students -- those from low-income families - attain educational parity with their middle-class peers."
- The proliferation of federal programs has also resulted in increased complexity and paperwork for school districts and states.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The more programs we add, the more we force disadvantaged students to compete for available funds. These students already have enough to compete against. Life's circumstances are competition enough. They should not have to compete for the chance to learn to read, to learn English, or to learn to add, subtract, and multiply." -- Education & the Workforce Chairman John Boehner (R-OH), July 2001